

DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL SYSTEM

Published in advance of incorporation in DPM Chapter 920 Retain until superseded

DPM LETTER: 920-7

SUBJECT: Senior Executive Service (SES)
Vacancy Announcements

DATE: MAR 11 1987

This Letter consolidates the Department of Transportation's policy regarding Vacancy Announcements for SES positions.

All vacancies must receive prior approval by the Executive Personnel and Training Division, M-13, before publication. Departmental policy requires that SES vacancy announcements be open to "ALL SOURCES" for at least 30 calendar days. This length of time is necessary in order to provide adequate distribution and response time for an effective outreach recruiting effort. The salary range must be specified and should be the current rates for ES-1 to ES-6, regardless of the pay level designator of the position. The announcement must state whether the position is General or Career-Reserved, the duties and qualifications requirements for the position, and the technical and managerial position demands, including those required by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). (See attached Federal Personnel Manual (FPM) Bulletin 920-32, now expired.) As general information, the announcement must mention the probationary period, the need for certification by an OPM Qualification Review Board if not already in the SES or a certified graduate of a Candidate Development Program, the requirement to file a financial disclosure statement within 30 calendar days of entry on duty, and, of course, specific details concerning how to apply for the position.

It is important that you keep in mind that all vacancy announcements must appear for at least 14 calendar days in the biweekly OPM SES Vacancy Announcement Publication, to satisfy the minimum civil service wide requirement of Title 5, United States Code 3393, and FPM Bulletin No. 920-25, Senior Executive Service Merit Staffing, dated August 1, 1979. Therefore, the proposed advertisement must be received in M-13, no later than the Monday of the week preceding the scheduled publication date, in order to meet the OPM publication deadline.

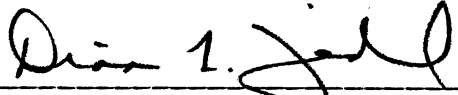
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Distribution: Personnel Council Members

OPI: M-13/Ingram

After the announcement has been approved, you will be asked to notify M-13 of the opening and closing dates. Please allow ample time for distribution (at least 5 working days), and bear in mind the timing of the OPM Publication when setting those dates. The Executive Personnel and Training Division will then forward the announcement to OPM for publication in the SES Vacancy Announcement Publication. You should watch these Publications to make sure that your vacancy appears. Copies of the Publications are routinely forwarded by M-13 to designated points in the Operating Administrations.

Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact your servicing M-13 personnel specialist, or Ernest Ingram, on 366-4122.



Director, Office of Personnel

Attachment

SUBJECT: Certification of Executive Qualifications By Qualifications
Review Boards

Heads of Departments and Independent Establishments:

1. **Purpose:** This Bulletin transmits guidelines, effective immediately, for certification of executive qualifications by qualifications review boards for initial career appointment to the Senior Executive Service. Agency comments and recommendations for revision will be welcomed. Established qualification review boards will also be consulted when changes to these guidelines are made.

2. **Legal Provisions.** 5 U.S.C. 3393(c) states that for career appointments:

(1) The Office shall establish one or more qualifications review boards, as appropriate. It is the function of the boards to certify the executive qualifications of candidates for initial appointment as career appointees in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Office . . .

(2) The Office shall, in consultation with the various qualification review boards, prescribe criteria for establishing executive qualifications for appointment of career appointees. The criteria shall provide for:

- (A) consideration of demonstrated executive experience;
- (B) consideration of successful participation in a career executive development program which is approved by the Office; and
- (C) sufficient flexibility to allow for the appointment of individuals who have special or unique qualities which indicate a likelihood of executive success and who would not otherwise be eligible for appointment.

Subsection (e) of the same section states further that "Each career appointee shall meet the executive qualifications of the position to which appointed, as determined in writing by the appointing authority."

3. **Related Bulletins.**

920-25 Senior Executive Service Merit Staffing, August 1, 1979.

920-19 Development For and Within the Senior Executive Service, May 23, 1979.

Inquiries: Executive Personnel and Management Development (202) 632-3782

Code: 920- Senior Executive Service

Distribution: Limited, Heads of Agencies and Assistant Secretaries for Admin. (or equiv.)

Bulletin Expires: October 20, 1980

4. Interim Procedures.

These procedures and related policies will be under continuing review by the Qualifications Review Board (QRB). As needed, they will be refined in consultation with the QRB, as provided by law. The initial procedures are as follows:

- a. No individual may request certification. Only an agency may submit a request for certification. An agency may request reconsideration of a negative determination when there is new information for the QRB's review.
- b. An agency may request certification as the final step in a merit staffing process directed toward a particular SES position.
- c. An agency may request certification, in advance of the merit selection process (b. above), of any of its employees following satisfactory completion of an OPM approved executive development program. Federal Executive Development Programs (FEDP-I, II, III and IV) have been approved by OPM for this purpose.
- d. An agency may also request advance certification of other candidates who have not completed an executive development program because of possession of demonstrated executive experience, criterion (a) in 5 U.S.C. 3393(c)(2). The number of such individuals in an agency candidate pool should not normally exceed 5% of the agency's total SES positions, and the number of non-government candidates therein should normally be no more than 2% of the agency's SES positions. Nominations for certification under this method may be made only after SES merit selection procedures have been used to identify the candidates for nomination, and must be based on criterion (a).
- e. The material to be submitted with the agency's request for certification is described in section 6 below. The QRB will seek additional information when necessary.
- f. The QRB will certify executive qualifications based on its judgment that the individual's record of accomplishment and executive qualifications as a whole indicates a likelihood of executive success.
- g. For a five-year period after the QRB action, a person whose executive qualifications have been certified may receive an initial appointment without further QRB review, unless the certification is revoked after QRB review of additional information. Section 6 of the Criteria for Agency Executive Development Programs (attachment to FPM Bulletin 920-19) and Part IVB of the attachment to FPM Bulletin 920-25 provide for an exception to the merit staffing requirement, under some circumstances, involving successful executive development program graduates (including FEDP graduates) who were selected for the development program through a merit process.

5. Executive Qualifications.

Executive qualifications are defined in terms of competence to assume leadership responsibilities in the following activity areas broadly applicable to executive positions throughout the Senior Executive Service:

1. Integration of Internal and External Program/Policy Issues
2. Organizational Representation and Liaison.
3. Direction and Guidance of Programs, Projects, or Policy Development.
4. Resource Acquisition and Administration.
5. Utilization of Human Resources.
6. Analysis and Review of Implementation and Results Achievement.

The substance of these activity areas is set forth in Attachment A. The QRB certification process will focus upon a review of documentation of a candidate's scope and quality of work experiences, accomplishments, and/or potential relevant to exercising executive leadership through managing and/or participating in the foregoing activity areas. Agencies are encouraged to incorporate these activity areas into their position qualification standards and into selection guides for SES positions. In this way, agency selecting officials will review the same executive qualifications information that QRB's consider.

Executive positions differ in the nature and degree of their demands for executive competencies. Some positions, for instance, may make high demands in regard to organizational representation and have relatively little need for skill in resource acquisition; other positions could have the reverse emphasis. SES members need not be qualified to undertake equally well every SES position, and, therefore, need not be optimally qualified in every activity area. It is the responsibility of the employing agency to assure that an individual meets the requisite qualifications for appointment or assignment to a specific SES position. The QRB, on the other hand, must assure itself that a candidate for entry into SES possesses sufficient breadth and depth of executive qualifications to be able to assume a variety of SES assignments (An individual, for example, with qualifications (experience, training or potential) covering only a few executive activity areas would not meet SES certification requirements.)

6. Submission of Request for Certification to the QRB

The SES Merit Staffing bulletin outlined the materials the agency should submit to the QRB when requesting certification of executive qualifications. They are restated below for convenient reference, with additional guidance. The requirement for both Standard Forms 161 and 171 is temporary until more appropriate forms are developed by OPM in consultation with agencies. The submission should include these items:

- a. Executive Personnel Transaction Form (OPM 1390).
- b. Executive Inventory Record (SF 161). If the candidate is being nominated for a specific position, it should be shown as the "present" position in the SF 161.
- c. For candidates from outside government only, a Personal Qualifications Statement (SF-171) and any agency supplemental executive qualifications form required to be completed by the candidate.
- d. Qualifications standard for the position or group of similar positions to which appointment is proposed (or for the group of target positions toward which the OPM approved executive development program is directed, when certification of a successful executive development program participant is proposed).
- e. Statement that the executive resources board has reviewed the candidate's qualifications and that the agency finds the candidate meets the qualification standard, or, in the case of advance certification, that the agency finds that the candidate has the necessary competence in executive activity areas.
- f. Brief written evaluation of the proposed appointee's background in support of the recommendation for approval of his or her executive qualifications. The evaluation statement should include the following information:
 - (1) identification of one or more of the criteria listed in 5 U.S.C. 3393(c)(2) and restated in Section 1, on which the recommendation for certification is based.
 - (2) information about the individual's background which supports the agency's evaluation. This must be based on the identified criteria and should provide the types of information listed below.

For Criterion (a), (Demonstrated Executive Experience).

Executive activity areas in which the individual has experience should be identified, with cross reference to SF 171 and/or SF161. References from persons able to evaluate past executive success in the activity areas listed in Section 5 should also be attached. No lengthy narrative is necessary since the information in the SF 161, SF 171, references and supplements should normally provide sufficient evidence for the QRB.

For Criterion (b), (Successful Participation in an OPM-Approved Executive Development Program).

The program and the date OPM approved it (or the FEDP program attended) should be identified. The dates of the individual's participation in the program should be included. The agency should state that all developmental activities were satisfactorily completed, and that the quality of performance in developmental activities indicates that the individual possesses the necessary competencies.

For Criterion (c), (Special or Unique Qualities Indicating the Likelihood of Executive Success).

The agency should discuss what executive qualifications the candidate possesses, the special or unique qualities of the individual (and how they were identified) and the developmental activities planned for the candidate during the probationary year. The agency must also submit references from persons with knowledge of the individual's executive potential in the activity areas listed in Section 5. Assessment center reports, verified supplemental qualifications statements or structured interview reports may supplement references. Criterion (c) may normally be used only when the individual could not reasonably be expected to have participated in an approved executive development process.


Jule M. Sugarman
Deputy Director

Attachment

This attachment is to provide information on the scope and content of the six activity areas that provide the focus for QRB review of executive qualifications. The listing of elements for each activity area is not meant to be exhaustive, but illustrative; nor is it expected that an individual will be a subject matter expert in these activities. What is required in each of these areas is that the individual candidate's record--experience, education, accomplishments, and/or potential--be indicative of competence to provide leadership for the accomplishment of these activities.

1. Integration of Internal and External Program/Policy Issues

This area involves seeing that key national and agency-wide goals, priorities, values, and other issues are taken into account in carrying out the responsibilities of the immediate work unit, including:

- Responsiveness to the general public and clientele groups
- Keeping up-to-date with relevant social, political, economic and technological developments
- Coordinating with other parts of the agency and other agencies as relevant
- Understanding the role of political leadership in the Administration and Congress

2. Organizational Representation and Liaison

This area covers functions related to establishing and maintaining relationships with key individuals and groups outside the immediate work unit and serving as a spokesperson for one's unit and organization. Types of actions generally required to carry out these functions include:

- Briefings, speeches, congressional testimony, inter-unit staff meetings, professional society presentations, question-and-answer sessions, etc. involving information giving and receiving, recommendations, persuasion, selling, negotiation, program defense

3. Direction and Guidance of Programs, Projects, or Policy Development

This area involves activities related to establishing goals and the structure and processes necessary to carry them out. These include:

- long-term and short-term planning; needs, forecasts, objectives, priorities, feasibility, options
- productivity and other effectiveness-efficiency standards
- information gathering and analysis

- research and development
- work organization structure and operational procedures
- scheduling and work assignment

4. Resource Acquisition and Administration

This area concerns procedures and activities related to obtaining and allocating the resources necessary to support program or policy implementation. These include:

- staffing: work force planning, recruitment and selection, including affirmative action and EEO
- budgeting: organizational and congressional procedures and processes
- procurement
- contracting

5. Utilization of Human Resources

This area involves processes and activities for seeing that people are appropriately employed and dealt with fairly and equitably. These include:

- assessment of individual capabilities and needs
- delegation of work
- provision for career development opportunities
- performance standards and appraisal
- EEO and other government-wide personnel utilization programs

6. Review of Implementation and Results

This area involves activities and procedures for seeing that plans are being implemented and/or adjusted as necessary and that the appropriate results are being achieved. These include:

- periodic monitoring and review
- program evaluation